The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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MENTAL HEALTH AND THE MINISTER

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The Pulpit

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In this Issue —

WILBERT MCKEACHIE is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan, where co-author LOUIS BERMAN is a graduate student. Since helping Dr. McKeachie prepare the article on mental health which begins on page 4, WESLEY ALLENSMITH has gone to Harvard University as an assistant professor of psychology.

PAUL W. HOON is Henry Sloane Coffin professor of pastoral theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York, from which he graduated in 1934. Study at Marburg, Cambridge and Edinburgh led to his receiving the Ph.D. degree from the University of Edinburgh. Ordained to the Methodist ministry in 1934, he held pastorates in New York and Connecticut before beginning a ten-year ministry at First Church, Germantown, Pa. He contributed an exposition of the Epistles of St. John to the *Interpreter's Bible*.

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RICHARD C. WHITE, minister for ten years of Disciples of Christ churches in Kentucky, is now serving the Bloomfield, Ky., Christian Church. A graduate of Transylvania College and the College of the Bible, both in Lexington, he is doing graduate work at the University of Kentucky and serving on its staff as a therapist in speech correction.

ALVIN C. PORTEOUS came to New York city from Canada in 1948 to study at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, where he is completing work this summer on the dissertation for his Ph.D. degree. He holds B.A. and B.D. degrees from McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont., and an M.A. in philosophy from the University of Toronto. Since 1951 he has been pastor of the Park Baptist Church on Staten Island. Last December he became a U.S. citizen, as he tells in his sermon.

JOHN S. WOOD, whose activities with the United Christian Youth Movement began during his own high school days, is now associate executive secretary of the Movement as well as associate executive director of the Department of Youth Work of the National Council of Churches. A graduate of Union Theological Seminary, he has held pastorates in Methodist churches of metropolitan New York. His interest in young people has taken him as delegate or committee member to Christian youth conferences on both sides of the Atlantic and has led to his appointment to committees planning government-sponsored programs, including the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth, held in 1950.

J. ELLIOTT CORBETT, a graduate of Temple University and Crozer Theological Seminary, had served churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania before he became minister six years ago of the Community Methodist Church in McHenry, Ill. His sermon on Amos was preached in January as part of a series on the prophets.

HOWARD CONN has been minister since 1944 of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis, which next year will observe its centennial. Dr. Conn is a member of the executive committee of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Church. His congregation in Minneapolis numbers approximately 2,000 members and owns a church plant valued at more than a million dollars.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXVII JULY 1956 No. 7

Memo:

WHAT with one thing and another the book review section of this magazine has gone absolutely to pot in the last few months. I know it. I admit it. I beg pardon for it. The trouble is that though time has a certain elasticity it is never enough for me. There just haven't been minutes enough recently even to go through the mechanics of getting the new books out to men who might review them.

Besides which, as Mrs. T.A.G. would be the first to tell you, I am constitutionally incapable of giving up a book once I have it in my hands. She, poor dear, is fighting desperately to keep clear a little circle of *lebensraum* in the vanishing heart of our book-bound home, but the publishers' flood has just about swamped us both. Every now and then Katie murmurs those wifely little irrelevancies about how I ought to read the last book I brought home before I add another. Even after all these years she has not realized that to the true addict the actual reading comes last. It is having and holding a new volume that counts, knowing what is in it, scanning snatches, peeking under the dust jacket, laying it around conspicuously, finally smiling back at it where it smiles down from a shelf. Most bibliophiles' wives know, but few others guess, that the real bibliophile is not so much an intellectual as a voluptuary. Caressing and gloating come well ahead of perusing. Of the several things about which I cannot be coolly reasonable, books are definitely the most.

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But what I started to say was that maybe one way to atone for my slackness will be for me to list with very brief comment the new books I would want to read this summer if I knew what I know now about this year's output but still hadn't read many. Summer is the time for the preacher to catch up, stock up, refuel, and reading in cool mornings at the drowsing church (d.v., and if D.V.B.S. is willing too) is the acceptable way. As if to certify that my selection shall include only the most memorably edifying of the books I have read since last summer, dead line for this issue finds me tearing across Kansas on the train, far from lists or libraries, forced to depend on the impression made by certain books themselves to remind me of their recommendable excellence.

First, four remarkable books of sermons, all by theologians, but all jammed full of insights pleading to be preached: *The Grandeur and the Misery of Man* by David Roberts (Oxford, $3.00), *The New Being* by Paul Tillich (Scribners, $2.75), *The Great Invitation* by Emil Brunner (Westminster, $3.00), and *To Whom Shall We Go?* by D. M. Baillie (Scribners, $3.00).

Theology, solid and rich enough to refill the basement bins and deep vats of our understanding, yet bright and personable enough to serve our regular utterance, lies at hand. Above all, there is Richard Niebuhr's *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (Harper, $2.00). If you have time to read only one book this summer, this is the book it should be. Here is theology as gristly and fibrous as the greatest—I am willing to settle for it as *the* ecumenical theology—yet so lyrical throughout that it wouldn't take much to set some pages to music. Reinhold Niebuhr had a new book this year too: *The Self and the Dramas of History* (Scribners, $3.75), required reading as usual for those who would keep up with the latest and best in theology. And speaking of keeping up, Walter Marshall Horton's *Ecumenical Theology* (Harper, $3.75) is a thoroughly scholarly and thoroughly readable account of such consensus as there is on the great doctrines, along with the principle dissents. Alexander Miller's very contemporary, contageously enthusiastic description of justification by faith, *The Renewal of Man* (Doubleday, $2.95), shouldn't be ignored.

Biblical scholarship has never seen anything quite like Robert McAfee Brown's *The Bible Speaks to You* (Westminster, $3.00). Nobody ever has. Count it out if you were planning your summer as a three-month discipline of doleful abnegation, but count it in if you would learn and at the same time know the joy of learning. The material in John Knox's important study of the biblical and apostolic roots of the church, *The Early Church and the Coming Great Church* (Abingdon, $2.50), ought to be in the arsenal of every ecumenically minded churchman. To brush up on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Millar Burrows' big *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Viking, $6.00) is still the fullest story.

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Obviously, I wouldn't have dared call attention to my remissness as a reviewer if action were not already initiated to remedy the situation. Books are going out now (each a fearful wrench) and reviews will be coming back shortly to be spread in these pages. Meanwhile, here is a start on a summer's worth of reading.

T. A. G.

By Wilbert McKeachie with
Wesley Allensmith and Louis Berman

MENTAL HEALTH AND

UNTIL recently the relation of the minister to the psychiatrist and clinical psychologist has received little study. Today, however, many ministers and psychotherapists feel that they share a common aim of helping the individual achieve wholeness of personality based upon integration with respect to self, society and ultimate values.

The Minister's Assets

In helping individuals solve problems of adjustment the minister has certain assets. In *The Church and Psychotherapy*, Stolz has observed that the clergy represents the only profession which is permitted to take the initiative in offering its services where seen to be needed. Unlike physicians and lawyers who are "restrained by professional ethics from going from house to house offering professional services," the minister is expected to seek those who need his pastoral attention.

While many sorely distressed individuals still feel that there is a stigma attached to consulting a psychiatrist, they may seek advice from their minister in the earliest stages of maladjustment. Hence the minister is in position to provide help while the patient is most able to use it.

In addition, the minister's assets include his cross-affiliations with the groups related to the church, and his strategic position in the community. These affiliations enable the minister to create group support for the individual attempting to cope with difficult personal or social problems.

The Minister's Handicaps

In certain respects the roles of clergyman and psychotherapist seem incompatible. The clergyman is primarily interested in ideas and behavior in the light of their ultimate meaning or value—their conformity with spiritual absolutes. The therapist, on the other hand, is primarily oriented toward evaluating the function of these ideas and behaviors in the mental and emotional life of the individual. While these approaches often have much in common, case histories clearly indicate that an extremely moralizing attitude is not usually effective therapeutically.

Parker Morell, in a *Saturday Evening Post* article entitled "Ministers in White," published in 1942, cited a case in which a "too-idealistic minister" helped drive into psychosis a young woman who tried to break away from a home dominated by a selfish, neurotic mother. The pastor continually dissuaded her with the argument that the mother-daughter relationship is "the most beautiful thing I have ever seen." The pastor was more concerned with filial devotion as a moral principle than with the girl's well-being and happiness. Let's be clear that the minister alone will not drive a person into psychosis. What he may do is to contribute one more unsatisfactory interpersonal relationship to a life history marked by many frustrations.

Similarly handicapping from a therapeutic viewpoint is the conception held by some ministers that suffering is the result of original or personal sin. While this doctrine is no longer accepted by many ministers, traces of it linger on. In fact, Karl Menninger suspects that some ministers who are themselves in need of psychiatric treatment prefer to "suffer in silence and reproach themselves for the sin of lack of faith."

In addition, surveys of mental health resources indicate that ministers typically lack training to make differential diagnoses even though one of the first persons the layman thinks of consulting is his minister. While it probably is not important that a minister be able to name very definitely the particular neurosis from which a parishioner is suffering, it is often important that the counselor know when to call upon other therapeutic resources in the community; e.g., upon encountering cases of severe neurosis or psychosis. Menninger cautions that a minister's inspiration may cure a neurotic headache, but it will have little effect on a headache caused by incipient uremia or brain tumor, though it "may postpone the recommendation of a proper treatment until too late."

When a church member is faced with problems so grave that he can see no way out, he goes to his pastor. Immediately the pastor is faced with concomitant problems almost as perplexing as those facing his parishioner. What sort of procedure can he use in helping his parishioner resolve his conflicts?

Procedures for Pastors

One of the pastor's basic resources is the religious faith of his patient. While this resource is one of the most difficult for the secular therapist to use, it is one which the pastor can use to great advantage.

The Catholic confessional is, in some respects, a ritualized therapeutic situation. In the confession, the Catholic church, like the psychoanalyst, employs the principle of catharsis. In verbalizing his conflicts and guilt feelings, the individual to some extent frees himself of them. In determining pen-

MINISTERS

nce and giving absolution the priest lifts from the onfessing believer his burden of guilt so that he is ree to achieve a new and healthier adjustment.

The Protestant church, when it abandoned the itual of confession before a priest, placed emphasis pon the private prayer of confession. Therapeuti- ally, the value of the prayer of confession is related o the religious beliefs of the person praying. If the enitent believes that God is merciful, all-loving, villing to forgive any sin as long as it is confessed o Him, he may find relief in a prayer of confession. But many people who consult the minister will be nable to picture God as merciful. The modern hurchgoer, moreover, is very likely to have neither he habit of considering his problems in prayer nor he faith that prayer will do any good. Here the minister can use his authority both in helping the ndividual develop a sense of a merciful God and in raying for and with him. If the parishioner is aced with a critical problem, his immediate need s not only for a merciful God, but also for an un- derstanding, tolerant pastor.

Because of this need, the patient is likely to de- velop strong emotional feelings toward his coun- elor. In a normal counseling situation, the client ften expresses toward the counselor resentments which he was never able to express toward his par- nts. The minister, however, is less likely to encoun- er such open irrational hostility because the minister is like the parent, a symbol of great au- thority and power. Thus we would expect this hos- ility to be expressed much more indirectly, perhaps n comments to other church members, in forgotten appointments, or in unexpressed thoughts.

Sympathetic Listener

The minister who becomes aware of such hostility s naturally disturbed. If he is a sophisticated coun- selor, he is likely to recognize this hostility and tell his parishioner that he knows that the latter gets angry with him and accepts it. We suspect, however, that this technique, frequently used by other coun- selors, may not always be appropriate for a minister. Because a clergyman holds such a highly respected position, even thinking critically about him may arouse the parishioner's guilt feelings. If the pastor were to bring these into the open, the parishioner's guilt and anxiety might be greatly increased. It thus might be better for the minister to talk about the problem in general terms or about some previous case, perhaps imaginary, in which a man became very angry toward the minister but who was still a good man. The main point, of course, is to help the parishioner recognize that one can feel angry toward his pastor without losing his pastor's acceptance as a good person.

On the other hand, the counselor may sometimes be the focus of great love and affection. Such an attachment may be a powerful therapeutic tool, but as Karl Menninger says in *The Human Mind*, it has happened that the minister who attempts to help a parishioner finds himself "being dismissed from his church for complications over which he ultimately found that he had no control whatever."

To minimize such risks, Carl Rogers in *Counseling and Psychotherapy* emphasizes the counselor's function as a sympathetic listener. He says that letting the client "talk out" his problems is a helpful, correct and usually safe process.

The authors would agree that the *first* thing the minister should do is be a sympathetic listener. During this stage he should avoid "advice," though accepting any expressed need or wish for it, and should have the goal of letting the person relieve himself by talking out his problem so that he can look at it more rationally and solve it. The counselor can aid in this process by making clarifying summary statements of the problem and of the solutions the individual proposes. And he can eventually say, "I wonder if there are any other ways the problem can be solved," so as to encourage a search for new directions of solution. The aim in this stage is to give the individual every chance to solve the problem himself.

Coercion Inadvisable

The *second* stage is resorted to if the first stage doesn't work. It might be called the stage of giving "advice," but this would be a bad term for what we have in mind. Even here the person himself should make the decision of a specific course of action, *without coercion*, especially without corecion based on moral arguments. The idea is to point out what the important considerations seem to be upon which any decision must be based—to help the individual to maintain perspective on his goals. In this taking stock of the situation all of the alternatives should be brought into the open, even though some of these may be against the moral code of the minister. Here is one of the greatest difficulties of the minister-counselor. Because of the minister's position neither he nor the parishioner mentions possible alternatives toward which the parishioner may be strongly urged. However, keeping quiet may be better than mentioning the alternative and revealing to the patient the strong emotions which the minister feels about it.

Above all the person should not be told how to *feel*. Even when the problem defines itself pretty definitely into only one possible course of *action*, it would be unwise to demand that he like that action and no longer have any lingering preferences for other actions. Suggestions may be made and considerations pointed out, but they should not be driven home in the face of resistance.

Perhaps this second stage could be summed up as

(Continued on page 17)

On Stopping Too Soon and Settling Too Cheaply

God vs. Religion

By Paul W. Hoon

O God, thou art my God, I seek thee. Psalm 63:1.

THE sixty-third Psalm opens with a prayer that comes near being the heart of religion, "O God, thou art my God, I seek thee," for a man cannot pray like that without disclosing a relation with the Divine that is living and real. A God prayed to in this manner is clearly no embarrassing legacy from the piety of a past generation that one does not quite know what to do with. A God thus prayed to is also clearly not the tribal God of one's nation whom it is good patriotism or good politics to acknowledge. A God thus prayed to is further not the conventional God of prayerbook or textbook, of conventional worship on the one hand or orthodox theology on the other. No, you feel that this Psalmist's God is real to him as his own God. Somewhere, somehow, as it were, this man has met God head on and God has met and possessed him, so that he boldly lifts his face to the universe and cries with all his being: "O God, thou art my God, I seek thee, my soul thirsts for thee . . . as in a dry and weary land."

Who of us does not respond to the grandeur of this kind of faith? For there is something incurable about the longing of our souls toward the Divine, and not least in our generation that seems to be emerging from a "dry and weary land." The irreligious forces of skepticism and secularism at work in our culture have until recently made it pretty rough for faith. But people do not say today what one critic cynically said not too many years ago: "God is a pushover." No, that is not the language we speak. There is a longing abroad, there does seem to be going on a "return to religion."

Religious Unbelievers

But while it is a return to religion, is it a turning to God? Now I am unsure of the answer, really, and one never wants to belittle any turning of man's soul toward the Divine. Yet I have the impression that while in a measure people have become enthusiastic about religion, they are not always enthusiastic about God. They may have revolted from certain "adventures in negation" recently fashionable, but I am not sure that they have gone on to deal firsthand with the Divine on the deepest level of their souls. In an incident from a recent novel a young American veteran, driven by his war experiences to search for a religious faith, met a monk who invited him to visit a monastery in Alsace. But after spending several months in the monastery the young man decided to move on because he had not found in the Benedictine faith what he was looking for, and in his farewell to the priest who had befriended him, he said, "I'm afraid I've been a disappointment to you, Father." But the wise priest kindly answered: "No, my son. You are only a deeply religious man who does not believe in God." Is not that our accent, our mood? How many people there are all about us who are genuinely religious, but whose lives, really, have never been confronted with the living God!

The prayer of the Psalmist speaks to this need, I submit. To begin with, observe this paradox in his prayer, that while he prays, "O God, I seek thee," he precedes these words with the exclamation, "O God, thou art my God!" This is to say, *God becomes real when we affirm him even as we seek him*, when our longing for him is set within the context of commitment to him. "O God, *thou art* . . . [yet] I seek thee." Now this has always been the approach of authentic faith, but let us confess that it is not an easy thing for us today, for it offends us to affirm even as we seek. That is not the way we have been taught to operate. Belief and commitment are supposed to come at the end, not at the beginning. Our temper of mind is to inquire rather than to affirm, to be critical rather than to accept, indeed to doubt rather than to pray. Young people, for example, are generally praised in our modern world for what we sometimes euphemistically call the "rugged realism of youth," their impatience with cant, the absence of hypocrisy in their living and thinking.

Divine Paradox

Now there is something clean and astringent about all this, and one is all for honesty in religion as everywhere else in life. But something about our pride in our "rugged realism" troubles me. I might put it this way: When does our so-called realism stop being a healthy sign of honesty and vitality, and become instead a sign of frustration and decay? How far does it reveal a genuinely adventurous attitude, and how far is it critical-mindedness come to a dead-end? How far is our pride in our skepticism legitimate, and how far is it paralyzing our ability to stake down the affirmations a man has got to have if he is going to live? And what is happening amidst all this to your God?

Now the testimony of religion, I repeat, is just this paradox—that God becomes real only when in our search for him we affirm him, and when we translate our attempt to find him as the mark of his already having found us. In the words of a friend of mine, while there are some things in life you cannot believe unless you understand them,

ıere are also some things you cannot understand ntil you first believe them. Detachment, dispas-ionate research, investigation, can bring us to know ɔme things in life, but hardly God. God is too liv-ıg for that; authentic religion is too dynamic for ıat; and man in his deepest being is too passionate ɔr that. You cannot deal with God as you would ɔnduct an experiment in a laboratory, or handle a ɛxt of Horace, or chronicle British history, or study ɔvernment fiscal policy. In these areas of life and thers like them, detachment and openmindedness ıay be sufficient to know. But the world of outward nowledge to which these are the key—charming ıd fascinating and significant as it is—is not the ıly world. Indeed some of us would say that it is ɔt even the most significant world; rather, that the ıward world of a man's relation with his God is the gnificant world. And in this world you must dare ı order to know, you must affirm in order to be-ɛve.

A faith like the Psalmist's is no diffident hypoth-sis suspended at the end of things. No, in a hrase of J. H. Oldham, this kind of faith in the last ıalysis is "an act of courage." It is taking one's fe in one's hands, and standing up and saying even ı face of all the irrational and demonic things that ɛem to deny him: "O God, thou art!" It is only hen our flesh longs for God as in a dry and weary ınd, when our hands are lifted up and our mouth ɔnfesses even as our soul follows hard after him, ıat God becomes real: "O God, thou art my God, seek thee."

A Personal God

Further, in these words the Psalmist is saying ɔ us that God is his own God: "O God, thou art ɣ God"; and again, authentic religion always ɒeaks like that. You do not feel here that the salmist is repeating hearsay, do you? He is not uoting from his secondary sources, nor invoking ıe religion of his godparents, nor citing his profes-ɔr of the philosophy of religion. No, his very gram-ıar gives him away. He is talking with God, not ɒout him, and real religion is always carried on as is here, in direct discourse, with the personal pro-ɒuns "Thou—I," "Thee—me," "Thine—mine." od is immediate here, God is personal, livingly ɛal, dealing directly with this man's own soul. Whatever other mistakes he has made or may make his spiritual pilgrimage, the mistake of believing somebody else's God, or stopping short of any od but his own, is not one of them. No, he is al-ost presumptuous, almost blasphemous in the bold-ɛss and individualism of his faith: "O God, thou art ɣ God, I seek thee."

Something like this, too, is set for every soul, and ɔt least in a time like ours when curiosity about od so easily substitutes as a passion for him. For od is always in danger of being patronized when ligion begins to become fashionable, of being lked about more than being talked to; and faith so easily corrupted by a kind of dilettantism. I ıve a friend who to me is the perfect symbol of is kind of thing. He classifies religion in his think-g along with his interest in modern art, and he makes an occasional trip to worship God two or three times a year in about the same way he lei-surely journeys down to the Museum of Modern Art two or three times a year "to see what's hap-pening." That is it! "What's happening to God these days?" It's as if people ask, "Have the neo-orthodoxists lost him yet? Have the liberals located him? What's the latest from the rationalists? Have the naturalists given up?" And so forth and so on. It's a kind of sophisticated religious game we play, in which God for many people never becomes more than an object of curiosity. He remains an "It" for them; they never go on to say, "O God, thou art *my* God!"

Intellectualism Intervenes

Again, some people take God as I think my friend does to a degree—just esthetically. They want reli-gion as an experience of beauty, and never mind about God's will or holiness confronting our human life. Perhaps it's Nature they turn to, spelled with a capital N—what someone described as "mixing yourself up with the landscape and calling it reli-gion." Or perhaps it's religion as the music of Bach they're interested in, or the loveliness of a stained glass window, or liturgical propriety, or the literary beauty of the Book of Common Prayer. Now reli-gion does mean beauty, let me make that clear. But where is the living, personal God in all this? Reli-gion of this sort is as if people had gotten into the forecourts of the beauty of the Lord, but had never gone on to the altar of his holiness to pray and offer sacrifice.

More likely we fall short of the Psalmist's prayer because our intellectualism gets in the way. But note, I say "intellectualism," not "intellects." For faith taxes the best powers of man's mind if he is ever going to be able to pray, "O God, thou art *my* God." Let us never forget that there is such a thing as the intellectual love of God. Indeed one reason why God is not real to many people lies right here: we will not bring the same energy of mind to know him that we bring to other significant enterprises of knowledge, and the God people believe in or pray to in their maturity often remains on about a par with their sixth grade mathematics skill in long division. Some time ago I read of a psychological test, given to a group of young people, which required quick, off-the-cuff answers. One question was, "Do you think God understands radar?" and to a man all answered No! Their idea of God was that of a deity whom science left behind, who had not been able to keep up with his own universe. How many people's intellectual comprehension of God borders on that! They are trying to manage with an adoles-cent conception of God quite inadequate for life in this modern world.

Yet when we have registered this danger, I am not sure it is the main one. An equal if not greater hindrance to faith for some people is what I would call intellectual speculation about God as distin-guished from living knowledge of him. It is not as shallow as the dilettantism I mentioned a moment ago, and yet it lacks the passion of the whole man. We turn to books to find God, or we take a course

in religion, or we converse with our friends, and collect an idea here and another there, hardly realizing that while this may be necessary spade work, we cannot finally find God that way, and we end up having to confess in the words of a character in a novel: "I cannot take a consensus about him, he must be *my* God."

There comes a time, I think, when a man in earnest about God must pass beyond these; for while estheticism, intellectualism, moralism, have their part in faith, the living God is greater than these. Sometimes if we are blessed this happens to us early in life, sometimes only late. A friend who served as a missionary in China for many years, once told me how it happened to him—one of the great turning points in his life. In the 1930s Japanese troops unexpectedly invaded the university city in which he had lived, and he had to flee by airplane on a few hours notice, leaving all his possessions, including his library which he had lovingly accumulated. He could take only one book with him, his Bible. And he said: "It wasn't until then that I realized how all through the years I had been running away from God by reading books about him!" "O God, thou art *my* God, I seek thee!"

Prayer Is the End of Life

Which brings us inevitably to the fact that the Psalmist *prays* these words, and that it is in prayer that he is meeting God and God is meeting him. The kind of religious faith we are talking about finally comes to that. Now I do not know how real the life of prayer is to us, but I do know that we cannot turn to God—as distinguished from merely "returning to religion"—without it. For what is at stake here is nothing less than the ends of life a man is living for, and how he manages those ends. If we want to believe as the Psalmist believes, we can never seek any lesser end than God. And what is more, we can never seek God as anything less than an end in himself, and the place where we do this is where the Psalmist did it, in the chamber of prayer. When a man prays, "O God, thou art my God," he is not seeking God merely to cement together his view of the universe. He is not praying to God to win peace of mind and cure his neurosis. He is not praying to God to make democracy strong and scare the Russians. He is not even praying to God to help him live a better life. No, prayer and faith for this man are an experience of ends—not of means; of rejoicing in God—not of using him; indeed, in the last analysis, of living in God and not even of seeking him. Which is to say, prayer is the end of life simply because God is the end. "It is truer to say," writes Forsyth, "that we live in order to pray than that we pray in order to live!" "O God, thou art my God . . . So I will bless thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on thy name."

This longing, this thirst for God, then, let us take care with it. It is the most sacred thing about us. It tells us of the purpose for which we were born. It points to the end we are meant to find. It tells of the life we are intended to live. It is only when we early seek God, when we remember him upon our beds and meditate upon him in the night watches, when our flesh longs for him, when our souls follow hard after him, that he meets us and we meet him: "O God, thou art my God, I seek thee."

Scriptural Pastoral Prayer

By John H. Gregg

First Congregational, Fresno, California

O THOU great Creator, in whom we move and live and have our being, we thank thee that thou art the source of light and that if we walk in that light we have fellowship with thee and with one another.

We thank thee that thou hast given us, not the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind, as we seek to worship thee in spirit and in truth, in the quiet confidence that if we acknowledge thee in all our ways, thou wilt direct our paths.

O Lord, thou hast searched us and known us. Whither shall we go from thy spirit, or whither shall we flee from thy presence? Search us and know our hearts, try us and know our thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in us and lead us in the way everlasting.

Grant us grace, O God, that we may deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thee; that we may care for the fatherless and the widowed, the sick and the needy, and keep ourselves unspotted before the world.

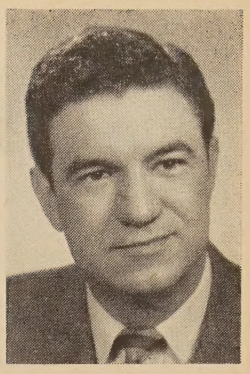
We thank thee that thou hast blessed us with the joy and care of children. Help us so to train them that they may learn to love whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, lovely and of good report, praying that they too may advance in wisdom and in stature and in favor with thee and their fellowmen.

We thank thee that thou hast made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth in peace together, as we seek that righteousness which will exalt our nation and deliver us from the sins of national and racial pride which are a denial of thy fatherhood.

Teach us, O God, to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom and let thy beauty be upon us and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, that we may deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, even Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name and spirit we pray. Amen.

Parable of the Prodigal Son Viewed in Totality

The Gospel Drama



By Ronald E. Sleeth

Luke 15:11-32.

AN outstanding theologian once remarked that he believed the entire gospel was wrapped up in the Prodigal Son story. Although this parable, like a well worn nickel, has lost many of its unique characteristics through perpetual use, its message taken in totality does give us a glimpse of our whole faith. It is obvious that we can look at this old story from many points of view. (One student once suggested that sometime we should preach the parable from the point of view of the fatted calf.) Rather than do that, let us see the parable as the drama of the entire gospel.

If the parable is a drama, perhaps the first act should be called "The Virtue of Sin: The Story of the Younger Son." We should hasten to assert that this title does not refer to contentment in a state of separation from God. Rather, it pertains to the pathway all human beings take and the redemption possible. For the younger brother is all of us. His story is not only a record of a wasted youth; it is also a hymn to freedom. It is the record of a human being longing to be a self, an individual; a person traversing the road which God makes possible with the glorious gift of freedom.

The Virtue of Sin

We see him first seeking his independence, his freedom. "Give me the share of property that falls to me." This is not a whine; it's a request to become a self—to establish his own individual personality, to become a man. And so he did. Yet what a contemporary and eternal picture; the self undirected turns against itself. Unbridled freedom becomes license; we become our own gods.

The scene changes and the Scripture reads, "He squandered." "He began to be in want." Is there a more trenchant picture of the experience of man?

Still, the younger son went further. "He came to himself." This is the virtue of his sin. The recognition of his need took him beyond himself. For the first time he took an over-all view and saw that becoming a self curiously leads to self-glorification. He is a dramatic example of the paradoxical warping of the freedom which man is given and needs. Yet when he came to himself he was on the road back. The recognition of his need was the prerequisite for the gospel drama to unfold.

And this recognition of need led inevitably to his repentance. "Father, I have sinned." This is the vital part of salvation: to come to oneself, to recognize the thwarted use of freedom, the license of unbridled freedom of self, the separation from the Father.

In this dramatic first act we see the vivid portrayal of the gift of freedom, its misuse, the consequences and the turning back.

The Sin of Virtue

If Act I is "The Virtue of Sin," the second act would certainly be "The Sin of Virtue: The Story of the Elder Brother." We need not labor the point here. There is too much of all of us here to make the adaptation necessary. His sins were not the gross sins of immorality; they were the drawing-room sins which so easily beset us all.

He was self-righteous, smug. Ready to condemn, proud. "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men . . ." Self-satisfied. Proud of his virtue and anxious to point a finger at his brother.

But he was not only self-righteous; he was selfish. The fatted calf was a symbol of all for which he had labored. His goods were his proudest possession. His position had been threatened. He was looking out for Number One. He could have little concern for anyone. He had lived near the father, yet curiously enough was further away than his brother.

But, perhaps worst of all, he was unforgiving. At least the younger son recognized the need of forgiveness. The elder brother neither saw his sin nor had the capacity to forgive.

The Prodigal Father

Isn't it curious that those who live close to the Father—even professionally—should be so far away at times. The elder brother was perhaps a deacon, or God forbid, a minister. But lest the picture become too sharply etched, let us hasten to Act III, "The Prodigal Father." Here is both the climax and the denouement of the story and of the gospel. The key to understanding the parable and life itself lies in the prodigal love of the father. Love was given in superabundance to his sons. After all this is the point of the story as Jesus told it.

The father gave the freedom. He encouraged the younger brother to become an individual. He didn't ask what the son would do. He bestowed the independence fully.

And yet, while his son "was yet a distance," the father ran to meet him, ready to accept the repentant, full of mercy, compassionate. He went to him and enfolded him in his arms. This is another side

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'Foolish worries, fretting troubles
Melt away at thy command.'

Antidote to Fear

By Richard C. White

A foolish man . . . built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew . . . and it fell. Matthew 7:26.

DO you remember the story of the three pigs? Two of them built their homes of sticks and straw, which proved to be poor shelter from the hot breath of the wolf. Our children will be quick to point out the moral of the story: it's foolish to build a straw house. Yet how closely the effort of the foolish pigs parallels much of modern life; how foolishly we spend our days in the temporary shelter of shoddily constructed spiritual dwellings.

We could point to many classic examples of temporary living: the "knight of the open road" who carries his straw house on his back and is motivated entirely by the expediency of the moment; the Hindu who looks upon all of life as a useless intermediate step on the way to his dreamed-of future state of nonexistence. But these are gnats to be strained, and we are swallowing some camels.

Hope Without Conviction

These are two basic attitudes of modern life which demonstrate to us the temporary, expedient nature of the lives we build. First, it is characteristic of us that we live rather pathetically under the shadow of what we hope will happen. The old phrase, "God's in his heaven: all's right with the world," is uttered today with an evident lack of conviction. There's a note of plaintive hopefulness in it, but little else; one might even expect to hear it spoken with a rising inflection at the end, denoting a question. The high resolve of a former generation which fought a war "to end wars" and claimed "the world for Christ in our time" has faded into impotence. More expressive of our present condition is the experience of the man who shuffles through the twilight years of a life largely wasted and squints skyward, searching for some ray of hope that his dismal future holds more than the chilling blackness of death.

And so we hope. We hope there'll be no third world war; we hope depression will be stayed and prosperity will continue; we hope some "reasonable" answer will be found to the racial problem; we hope that freedom will win over tyranny. But there isn't much conviction or assurance in our hoping.

Far more real and more evident is the crushing fact that we live, tremblingly, under the black shadow of what we fear will happen. Look about you: what more are our arms and munitions making than cold, sickening fear of what might happen? What more are they than a temporarily expedient "answer" to our dread of tomorrow's mushroom cloud over New York or Ourtown? Consider our peace talks and international agreements: are they not at base political shuffling of the deck of international power because we're afraid to have the cards dealt straight off the top as they are? Investigate the motivation behind the propaganda of the "free" world; why are we so concerned that Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America should accomplish their purposes? Is not the most true answer to be found in fear for ourselves rather than concern for others?

What is our most frequent reaction to the Supreme Court ruling on segregation, to the fluctuations of the stock market, to the spirit of revolution which splotches the face of the earth? Why are many Christians passively silent on controversial issues? Why are our churches increasingly full with each "improvement" in the power of atom warfare? Our lives may be somewhat nourished by a pathetic hope that tomorrow will be brighter, but it's far more true that life today is stampeded by stark fear which bids us scurry about gathering sticks and straw to build a bulwark against tomorrow.

In the worlds of Ralph Edwards, "This Is Your Life"; this is the house that fear built. How do you like it, is it satisfactory? Are you satisfied with the cold war, with Korea and Lebanon, with waiting and hoping while violence reigns? Are you satisfied with atom bomb blasts which poison innocent fishermen, with food stock-piling while people are starving, with rioting on college campuses and bus boycotts? Are you content to see gnawing unrest rumble in the maw of the world and erupt in fever blisters all over her harried face? Are you pleased that every year our mental hospitals, as well as our churches, are more filled.

The Christian's Answer

I hear your answer; and I hear your question. Isn't there something else; isn't there something better to build on than this fluid fear? This is the temporary; where is the eternal life? This is the empty; where is the abundant life? I am no oracle of the future, but it doesn't need one to answer the question. It needs only a Christian who will listen to the voice of God in the Scriptures and in history.

His answer to our dilemma is direct and sure.

Instead of living under the shadow of what might happen, we must begin to live in the strength of what *has* happened. Life isn't built on what might be or what might have been; it rises tall on the foundation of what has been and is. Look at Jesus and compare the fate of his nation with ours. Israel was a slave to Rome, impoverished, oppressed; and when the crowds would have revolted under Jesus' leadership, he answered them, "My kingdom is not of this world." He had no fear of Rome such as our fear of Russia; he had no dread of the future like our unreasoning fear of tomorrow. He didn't preach against his enemies; he preached *to* them. And he triumphed! Consider the early church: it was outnumbered, derided, persecuted, hunted. Was it fear that sang in the arena at Rome and died head downward on a cross? No, it was confidence and commitment; and it triumphed! Or think of modern times: look at the Emancipation Proclamation and its twin, the Supreme Court ruling on segregation, and see the sure foundation of God's rule on which abundant life can be built. If God wrought these things, is he then bound by the chains which seem to bind us today? If our fathers were so strong in his might, why then are we so weak to work his will? Is there no deliverance for today?

God's Way Will Triumph

Yes! Instead of living under the shadow of what might happen, we must live in the strength of what *has* happened, and in the faith of what *will* happen! God triumphed through the saints and through our fathers; and the disorder of man's today will become the design of God's tomorrow. God will be victorious, of that we must be sure; but to share the victory, to bring victory today, we must live it —God's way. We must know that our modern enthronement of science and knowledge will be as the idolatry of ancient Greece. We must know that our present worship of power and military might will be as the folly of Rome, now dust and memory. We must see the rule of God's way, as old as space and time, and say with Paul, tongues *shall* cease; knowledge *shall* be done away; the straw houses will perish; but now abideth—and shall abide—God's love.

This is why Jesus had no fear; he loved. This is why the early church conquered; it loved, embraced Rome. This is why the slaves were freed and segregation is outlawed; *God* loves.

Let's not live by "if" or "maybe." Let's not wait and hope for something to happen; let's *make* something happen, in the might of God's own strength and by his will. Let's begin turning the world right side up by turning ourselves away from fear for ourselves toward confidence in God who works within us. Let's begin living as if we really believed that God *is*, and that he rules and loves.

We know what love is; and we know how God wants us to use it. The gospel isn't new, and the power of God still fills it. The trouble with our world is that we just don't believe it will work; we're prejudiced against it. Turn the other cheek? "Nonsense. Then you'll get *two* black eyes." Give up life in order to have it? "That's poor arithmetic." Love your enemies and feed them? "Then they'll be the stronger to conquer you. Idealistic nonsense!" How do we know? What right have we to say? Have we ever really tried it?

Four hundred and forty years ago this same nonsense of God's will burned itself into the heart of a man who, like us, was living a life of empty expediency. When he thought upon this revelation he said to himself, "This is revolutionary! It will upset our political structure; it will disrupt our economy; it will tear the church asunder; it will pit man against his brother!" He said all the things we say when confronted with the will of God. But he said something else as well—to himself and to the world: Luther stood opposed to the powers of fear and proclaimed, "Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me." And God did!

The Gospel Drama

(Continued from page 9)

to the Hound of Heaven—this time not chasing nor pursuing, but meeting face to face, reaching out, loving.

Still more important, the father's love was prodigal enough for both sons. One was loved because he did not see; one was loved because he did. The love was enough for both. This is the assuaging balm of forgiveness which is the father's greatest characteristic. Both sons had been lost. In a real way, both had been found. The forgiving love of the father brings this gospel drama to the climax at the end of Act III.

Yet, strangely enough, the curtain does not fall. Nor is there a moral at the end, nor an application to be made. For this dramatic parable is the drama of the entire gospel. The production goes on still, on the stage of life. You and I are among the players!

The Subtle One

IN the wide wastes of our red desert wrath
He sets a white enclave of calm; we rejoice
For His sake in the very center of tired sorrow; and when
We set mind, seal ears against His word, we yet hear it,
And banishing knowledge, we yet know.

In the midmost moments of our darkest discernment
He comes thunderless, the still small voice;
Though breaker-of-nations-asunder, He guides then
With the beneficent feather-touch of hint and spirit,
Abandoning lightnings, uses the heart's least glow.

SIEGMUND A. E. BETZ.

Reflections of a New Citizen

By Alvin C. Porteous

ON a mountaintop on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, lie the earthly remains of Alexander Graham Bell. Bell, a native of Scotland who later became a citizen of the United States, used to have a great fondness for that mountain because it reminded him of the scenes of his youth in the highlands of the old country. Climbing its rugged peaks would stimulate his imagination and provide him with the creative insights which resulted in inventions that have benefited mankind. His sentimental attachment to that particular mountain led him to leave instructions that on his death he should be buried there. Visitors will find today over his grave a bronze tablet with the following inscription:

Alexander Graham Bell
Inventor-Teacher
Born Edinburgh, March 3, 1847
Died, a Citizen of the U.S.A., 1922

A citizen of the U.S.A.! Bell's career was a long and illustrious one. His epitaph might have recited his many fabulous inventions and the honors with which he was rewarded by a grateful humanity. But he wished to be remembered rather by the fact that he was "a citizen of the U.S.A."

The Oath of Naturalization

On December 2, 1955, I was able to say for the first time, "I am a citizen of the United States," as with 85 fellow immigrants I stood before the judge of the state Supreme Court to take the oath of naturalization: "I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same."

You can appreciate, I am sure, that such an oath is not something you swear to casually or easily. It involves a decision which is soul-searching in its implications. When you are a citizen by birth it is very easy to take your citizenship pretty much for granted and never give too much thought as to what it really means. But when you are a citizen by deliberate choice—when you renounce the citizenship of the land of your birth to take up citizenship in an adopted country—it is more difficult to avoid at least a degree of reflection as to the significance of such a far-reaching decision.

Today I want to share with you some of my reflections on becoming a new citizen. I do so because of my deep conviction that Christianity and good citizenship go together. We can no more separate our Christian faith from our political life than we can keep it out of our home life or our business life. If Christ is the Lord of all life, he challenges us at the point of our daily vocations, not only as parents or as workers or as teachers, but as citizens as well. Today Christ not only sits over against the treasury, taking notice of our stewardship of money, but he presides also at the voting booths and the houses of legislature, marking our stewardship of the ballot.

Christian Citizenship

If this is true, surely it is a violation of our Christian trust to cordon off this whole field of citizenship and mark it with the label "politics" and then piously fold our hands and say "religion and politics don't mix." If they don't mix, then God help America! God help the world! For only in a courageous and informed Christian citizenship is there a hope of finding a way out of the tragic dilemmas which are pushing our world today to the very brink of disaster.

In becoming a citizen of the United States I have been inspired to reflect anew on the meaning of patriotism. I have been particularly concerned to ask myself about the kind of patriotism which we as Christian citizens can conscientiously espouse. Patriotism is a slippery word of many meanings. Again and again in history its meaning has been distorted with hideous results for mankind. On the other hand, when rightly conceived, patriotism has been responsible for some of our finest hours.

At its best, patriotism is one of the noblest of human sentiments. Like the love of family, love of country can be a potent force for drawing out the best that is in us. It has been rightly said that patriotism is "an invaluable medicine for self-centered human nature." In a time of national crisis we observe how again and again even supposedly unworthy persons, motivated by patriotic instincts, exhibit astonishing self-sacrifice and endurance. Life itself seems not too dear a price to pay for those whose love of country is strong and true.

Jesus himself was one of the greatest of patriots. He loved his nation, and particularly his nation's capital deeply. Remember how he wept over that city! Remember, too, that anguished cry as he recalled his seemingly fruitless efforts to minister to

is beloved people! "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing ne prophets and stoning whose who are sent to ou! How often would I have gathered your chil- ren together as a hen gathers her brood under her ings, and you would not!"

Great Patriots of History

John Knox was another great patriot. One night, e are told, at a crucial stage of his battle with the oman church, Knox was overheard in his garden leading with God on behalf of his country. "Give ne Scotland," was his thrice-repeated prayer ut- ered from a heart choking with emotion and bur- ened with a great concern. We may speculate that t was in large measure because this one man was eady to sacrifice himself so completely for his coun- ry and his God that streams of blessing have flowed rom Scotland since that day.

Among the great patriots of history surely must e numbered the father of our own country, George Washington. In Maxwell Anderson's play *Valley Forge*, Washington joins a group of his bedraggled nd dispirited soldiers in the shelter of an old barn. n a moving speech he burns into their conscious- ess the true nature of their plight: "I promise hose who follow me further, no chance of victory, or, by my God, I see none; no glory or gain, or aurels returning home, but wounds and death— old, disease and hunger, winters to come such as his you have, with our bloody trail in the snow and o end to it till you shovel each other in with those t Valley Forge." And later, when they have fin- shed their heartbreaking task of burying their dead omrades, he turns to his men and says: "This lib- rty will look easy by and by when nobody dies to et it."*

Such is the greatness inspired by true patriotism, patriotism which holds nothing to be too precious o surrender for the good of one's country, not even ife itself.

Evils of Perverted Patriotism

But if patriotism is capable of lifting the human pirit to unimagined heights of self-forgetful hero- sm, it can drag that same spirit to unspeakable depths of degradation and shame. It was a per- verted patriotism which spawned the evils of Hitler- sm and Fascism and bequeathed to posterity the ghastly memories of a Belsen and a Buchenwald. And in our own land today there is a noisy, flag- waving variety of patriotism which is a dangerous perversion of the real thing. This self-styled patriot- sm expresses itself mainly in superficial slogans cal- culated to play on men's emotions rather than appeal to their intelligence. It defines Americanism narrowly in terms of some political orthodoxy and spends its energies in hounding and attacking those who do not conform to its particular definition.

The trouble with such sham patriotism is that it orgets that there is a loyalty above our loyalty to ountry—and that is to God. Long ago Jesus set lown this principle once and for all: "Render there- ore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." This means that, however much we love our country, there are cer- tain things which our country cannot demand of us because they belong to God. It cannot, for example, demand jurisdiction over our conscience. It cannot take away our right of critical judgment and dis- sent. Our loyalty to the truth as God gives us the light to see it can never be secondary to our loyalty to our country. Whenever the fear of communism or a misguided patriotism reverses that order of pri- ority, we have substituted totalitarianism for de- mocracy, and we have surrendered to Caesar what rightfully belongs to God.

J. B. Priestly once said that our behavior toward our country should be like that of a loving wife who "will do anything for her husband except stop criti- cizing him and trying to improve him." Our country deserves "the same affectionate but sharp glance." Has that not been the authentic American tradi- tion? Have we forgotten that this country was born in a revolution and has become great through bold new ideas, unorthodox opinions, and daring experi- mentation? To equate loyalty with conformity is a recent heresy which has no place in the American dream of "liberty and justice for all."

Revolutionary Outlook Lost

In recent years many of the more thoughtful citi- zens of our country have found reason to be appre- hensive about what is happening to this tradition which has constituted America's greatness. Some- how, we allowed our fears and our growing obsession with security to stifle the revolutionary spirit which burned so brightly in our father's breasts. At a churchmen's seminar in Washington a year ago, Dr. Walter Van Kirk put this kind of searching ques- tion about present-day America in unforgettable words. "What a spectacle!" he said. "The United States, with natural resources that are the envy of the entire world, with an industrial and economic strength without precedent in history, with a dem- onstrated capacity to achieve a standard of living higher than that attained by any people at any time, with a heritage of freedom that has been the inspiration of millions across the seas, this nation, the United States of America, stands before the world as a giant bound hand and foot by the chains of its own fears and anxieties. Once the acknowl- edged leader of the masses in quest of larger free- doms, we have been reduced to the status of a caretaker of the past. Because we are afraid, we have developed the habit of looking backward. That revolutionary outlook on life which once was ours, is ours no more. That spirit of daring and creative adventure by which we upon this continent moved from sea to shining sea, has departed from us. We behave as a nation that is old and tired, and for whom there is no higher destiny than to pursue a policy of containment."

Is that too sweeping an indictment? Perhaps so. And yet it contains enough truth to leave us singu- larly uncomfortable. It points up the fact that today as never before we need an active, vocal,

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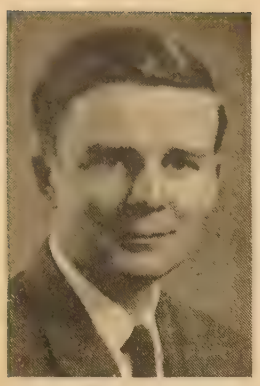
*Maxwell Anderson, *Valley Forge* (Washington, D.C.: Anderson House, 934). Used by permission.



Our Citizenship under Christ

By John S. Wood

This year's Youth Week, back in February, had as its theme "Our Citizenship under Christ." The topic is at least as appropriate to Independence Day observance as it was to its original occasion.

YOUNG people are often naive. It would be easy to think that those who chose the Youth Week theme just didn't know the score. Young people often see facile, surface solutions to complex, entrenched problems. It would help explain the seeming presumption of a phrase like "Our Citizenship under Christ" to think of it as an outgrowth of a superficial social consciousness.

"The obvious" is that our communities, our nation, our world are not to be described in terms of Christian community. Alienation, antagonism, anxiety, fear, force—but a brief catalogue of the divisive by-products of our sinful human relations. In Chicago as in Mississippi, the dynamite of racial tensions smoldering on a short fuse. In Washington as in Moscow, the threat of trigger-happy diplomacy moving us toward each new brink.

"The obvious" is that our citizenship is no more under Christ than are our lives. A current denominational periodical points with pride to the number of key Washingtonians from their communion. But should we ask our young people to emulate them—these apostles of a perverse decalogue? The two who are so devoted to the cause of war at any price? The three, for instance, who preach the gospel of false witness and guilt by innuendo? The half-dozen whose parable reads: " Let thy neighbor starve, we'll be O. K."? The too many whose only commandment is "Keep the black man in this place even if it means defying the law of the land"?

"The obvious" can be misleading and we must give our young people credit for seeing below the surface. For piercing the sham and hypocrisy and pretension. Credit for their insight, yes . . . but what can we give them for their disillusionment?

Faith in Terms of Citizenship

A faith? Oh, but a faith in what—in human institutions and crusades that, being built of dust, most surely will crumble and pass away? No, no—a faith in God and, in terms of citizenship, in God's Kingdom that shall never cease.

And there's the rub! Nothing has so confused and divided the Church of Christ as the constant endeavor to chart the reach of the Kingdom, to map its contours and take census of its populations. They struggled with it at Jerusalem. They grappled with it at Evanston. And we each have our own conclusions.

Some say the Kingdom is not of this world, that as long as human sin is so entrenched about all you can hope to do is redeem a few souls here and there to provide a "holy remnant" for the Lord to use when he establishes his new order. And before we rush to ridicule or belittle such clean-skirted pietism, we find ourselves humbled and embarrassed at our own lack of such firm faith and grand assurance.

Some say the Kingdom is about to come; let us make haste to bring it in by overcoming the powers of evil and darkness. There is work to be done and God calls us to do it. And before we despise such activism, which can so easily lose sight of all things spiritual in the consuming struggle against material evil, we want to pause in the thankful appreciation that God does have uses for our time and energies.

Our Concern Is to Bear Witness

Perhaps between our Scylla and Charybdis there is a strait that we can navigate in truth. For actually it is not *our* job to bring the Kingdom in. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" and "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses . . . to the end of the earth."

What is *our* concern is to tell of the coming Kingdom and in vital faith use our talents to show what its coming will mean in the lives of men. I think that was the vision of the leaders of the United Christian Youth Movement in its earlier years when they vowed to "live as if the Kingdom of God was at hand." Not concerned in any sense to schedule its coming, but vitally concerned that all men should know that in its coming God would do away with discrimination and exploitation and war and deprivation. Bearing witness to the fact that if we expect to enjoy life in the Kingdom, there will be a whole lot of comforting, compensating sins we will have to do without—and we might as well start learning to do without them right now!

For some people that's not a too acceptable plan r living in a world in revolution. In these dark nes they want to be at work to ward off the on- shing night. And I would not have them put out eir candles or hide them under bushels, but only remember that not the light of a billion candles ill sweep away the night as will the light from on gh. It may be, as Paul Sherer has put it, that "the rk times are pre-eminently God's times."

A Faith for Young People

It takes a peculiar kind of faith to leave the ulti- ate outcome in God's hands and yet remain alive situations of human need. To say "Thine is the ory" and really mean thine and not mine, and yet ntinue to seek to reflect that glory into some of e gloomy corners of man's existence. To say "Thy ill be done" and accept that all we can do is show en something of what that Will demands and im- ies. ALL? That's more than most of us are capable even now, so how do we dare presume to bring in e whole Kingdom on our shoulders?

It takes, I say, a peculiar kind of faith, and yet I ink it is the kind of faith we need to teach our ung people. Nothing breeds a middle-aged gen- ation of mugwumps and do-nothings quicker an a youth generation raised on the false hope at they were going to remake the world overnight. et us then help our young people face the reality at it is *God's* Kingdom and *God's* Will that are volved and that their job—our job—is to know at Will and reflect it as best we can.

Revolution Requires Revolutionaries

In a world in revolution, let's be done with calling ung people to be good citizens. Revolutions re- ire revolutionaries, not conformists. When the ber-rattlers would equate good citizenship with e willingness to have every red-blooded youth ear a uniform, we need to challenge that so-called ght of the community. When the bigots would uate good citizenship with a willingness to sup- rt subverting of a society built on notions of periority, when men would equate religion and od citizenship making it a smooth and easily vallowed pill to ward off every social headache d ease every qualm of conscience, we need to nspire and plot and blow up and tear down.

For our citizenship *is under Christ*, after all. Once in a house there was a wedding festival. The usicians sat in a corner and played their instru- ents, the guests danced to the music and were erry, and the house was filled with joy. But a deaf an passed outside the house; he looked in through e window and saw the people whirling about the om, leaping and throwing about their arms. 'See w they fling themselves around,' he cried. 'It is a use filled with madmen.' For he could not hear e music to which they danced."

The world may not hear the music and may unt us fools for our antics, but—and I don't mean be at all flippant—God is calling the tune and we ed to dance to it. That, in essence, is our citizen- ip under Christ.

Reflections of a Citizen

(Continued from page 13)

determined Christian citizenship which will reflect its views in the halls of Congress and the policies of our nation.

Some there are who are content to leave to the politicians this business of running our country. If Christians take that position, you may be sure that there are others across this country by the thousands who will have different ideas. With no enlightened Christian influence to counteract their pressure tactics, they will lobby their particular program into law whether it is ruinous for the country or not. And we can scarcely blame the politicians, if we as the custodians of the nation's conscience show so little concern that we fail to register our opinion with our representatives in Congress, and even, in many cases, neglect to vote for them in the first place.

Surely a minimum obligation of Christian citizenship is to exercise the stewardship of the ballot. In 1896, out of every 100 voters, 83 went to the polls—and without a car or a bus to convey them to the ballot box. In the election of 1948, barely 50 out of every 100 qualified voters showed up at the polls. I submit to you that we Christians had better start taking our citizenship more seriously than that or get ready for the consequences! "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil," said Edmund Burke, "is that good men do nothing."

The time is long overdue for good men—Christian men—to do something in this field of citizenship, to do vastly more than they have been doing to date. In this election year there is much that you as an individual Christian citizen can do. You can study carefully the issues and the candidates and make up your mind about them, not on the basis of campaign oratory or appeals to selfish interest, but in the light of the total welfare of our country and the world. To be informed in these matters to the best of our ability, and to act on the light which we have by casting our vote when election time comes, is a sacred Christian duty which you or I cannot escape as citizens of this free land.

As Christians, you and I hold our citizenship, as we hold everything else, under God. To be true Christian patriots requires more than sentimental adulation of the land of our birth or the land of our adoption. It requires that we hold our citizenship as a sacred trust, not only to our country but to the One who holds all nations in his hand. Let us, then, honor our vocation as Christian citizens and affirm by our lives that we belong to a nation "whose God is the Lord."

LIBERTY

CHRISTIANITY is the companion of liberty in all its conflicts, the cradle of its infancy, and the divine source of its claims.—*De Tocqueville.*

A Modern Prophet Could Find Muc
That He Might Criticiz

Amos Today

By J. Elliott Corbett

MOST of us lack the courage to speak to our society today with the boldness shown by the prophet Amos back in the 8th century B.C. But if we did, what might we say?

•

Thus says the Lord: "For the three transgressions of Germany and for the four, I will not turn it back—for you have brought destruction upon the countryside and laid waste the cities. A wall shall divide you and foreign nations shall occupy you.

"For the three transgressions of Japan and for the four I will not turn it back—because you have ravaged your neighbors and sought to oppress the weak in battle. I will make of you an armed camp and a naval base, though in your constitution you outlaw war.

"For the three transgressions of Russia and for the four, I will not turn it back—for you have kept your people in ignorance by censorship and falsely convinced them of their prosperity. You have rattled the sword above the noisy proclamations of your peaceful intentions and tampered with the freedom of friendly nations. So I will tip your hand to your opponents and saddle your people with the heavy burden of armaments.

"For the three transgressions of America and for the four, I will not turn it back—because you have dropped atom bombs without remorse upon open cities and tested H-bombs *ad infinitum*, since you care not about fallout in California or radioactivity in the Pacific.

"So I will make other nations fear your power and envy your wealth. Your doom is assured; your demise is at hand, for I hear your songs of self-praise; I listen also to your criticism of others. But though I remove the wax from my straining ears, I cannot hear your voice raised in self-judgment or repentance.

"There is wailing in the streets of Washington, and confusion on the expressways of Chicago.

"There is atomic dust over the city of Los Angeles—no smog lay so heavy or so long. The cries of children in New York city are heard above the siren's call.

"For you trusted in the makers of atom bombs, but not the Maker of the atom.

"Hear this word, you who while away the idle hours saying, 'When will the next bingo game be played?' or 'What club shall we go to tonight?' Woe unto you who go to deep freezers saying, 'Shall it be steak or chicken?' but care not for my childre in India who have no rice.

"For I will take away what you think you hav and give it to those who have none.

"I hate your new church buildings, I take n great pleasure in your rising membership rolls. Th tinkle of your treasuries gives me an earache!

"Take away from my sight your veneer of piety To your boasts of being a Christian nation I wil not listen. But let justice roll down like mighty waters and righteousness like a perennial stream!

"Woe unto you unless you search after my way and follow after my commandments! Your grand fathers found America a haven for the many; you have made it a refuge for the few.

"Your poetry at the gate says, 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses'; but your law at the gate says, 'Your nationality is wrong your politics are wrong, your color is wrong, you were born in the wrong place—stay home!'

"Give heed to my word, O Mississippi,
Stop not your ears, O Cicero,
Turn not thou away, Trumbull Park!

"For your sense of justice is appalling,
For you are immune to the law you framed.
You drag a boy out of bed at midnight
And murder him when he deserves a spanking.

"For you boast of your white supremacy,
And flaunt the highest court in the land.
Surely your fall shall be certain,
Your pride laid to rest in the dust.

"Your farmers want 90 per cent parity;
Your businessmen cost-plus contracts;
Your unions seek guaranteed annual wages;
Your veterans lobby for special privileges.
Yet a cry goes up from the same people:
'Down with high prices! Down with inflation!
Down with big government!'

"Every pressure group among you wants cake,
But let the other man pay for it!"

I am not a called preacher who must depend for his security upon those who hire him, who must

ase the people of the pews, but not necessarily
God of the heavens.
For my calling is of God, for I am only a poor
pherd and the pruner of fruit trees.

But the Lord took me from behind the flock,
And the Lord said to me,
"Go, prophesy to my people of America."

•

This is the kind of thing that Amos would say to We probably wouldn't like it and would stone n to death. Later, we would build a statue to his mory so we could forget his words with a clear nscience.
We would only remember him when his prophecy s fulfilled in our midst.

Delinquents Need Love

READ in the newspaper yesterday about a bish-
op's speech, a very indignant call to contempo-
y youth to forego its immoral ways and gather
nd the good and true cause. It struck me as a
ring display of unimaginative adult helplessness.
is ecclesiastic, so far removed from the existence
these young people, should know his voice carries
t the slightest weight with them. If he could for-
t for a while that his church has become an estab-
hed power with established rules, owning a wealth
property, and go back to its origin and to the life
the saints, he might find a basis from which to
al with the immorality he speaks of. A Teresa of
vila wouldn't proclaim from the pulpit, but would
nge into that seething cauldron, foreign, hostile
d frightful as it might appear to her, and go to
rk with her visionary energy and practical good
mor.
These problems need self-denying people, full of
thusiasm, ready to forget any difference between
e I and the you. One can't deal with them arro-
ntly; one must love them. The more they worry
u, the nearer they should come to your heart.
thing will make these youngsters [delinquents]
re screwed-up, obstinate, and icy than the sus-
cion of being looked at as patients; they hate
thing more than an attitude of pity or condescen-
on or a camouflaged attempt at cultural educa-
on. They resist any prying into their inner lives.
eir reason may be false pride and stupidity but
is a strong reality. Though they hate the condi-
ons in which they live, they'd rather accept them
an be patted on the back and taught by people
ose motives they suspect to be the preservation
society. It isn't Christ such people bring nor nor-
ality for its own sake, they think. These people
me not to help them but to prevent the lady with
e handbag from being coshed.—*From* Journey
to a Fog *by Margareta Berger-Hamerschlag, copy-
ght 1956, Margareta Berger-Hamerschlag (pub-
hed by Sheed & Ward, Inc., New York). Used by
rmission.*

Mental Health

(Continued from page 5)

follows: treat the problem as an objective one, e.g., as a matter of a decision among alternatives, even though emotional or irrational elements may be apparent—take a common sense, objective, calm approach; help the person become aware of considerations in terms of what needs *of his*—not moral needs of the minister—would be satisfied or frustrated by various courses of action. If necessary, specific courses of action may be suggested for consideration, but they should not be argued for or urged on him. When a suggestion of a course of action is made, he himself should be led to reason out how it would work. When he proposes an action, he should be led to bring out what its effects would be, and only where he himself cannot figure out good or bad effects should these be pointed out to him. But all these qualifications about advice should not discourage the minister from using it. Advice given without coercion is the "first aid" of mental hygiene and should be used not only by ministers but by physicians and teachers.

Nevertheless, it is very important that the pastor, who may have finally resorted to the giving of advice in stage two, should be aware that the advisee may not be able to apply the advice. This should not be looked on as ingratitude or as sinful weakness; instead, it is a sign that there are more complexities—probably emotional ones—to the problem than were apparent and simple advice was not the solution. So if a person comes back and still has the problem, stage three is called for. (Stage three is called for right after stage one if the problem has no objective solution but seems to be solely one of resolving the person's feelings, yet stage one has not accomplished this end.) Stage three is simply referring the person to a psychologically trained counselor.

By being understanding, tolerant and a good listener, the minister can be of much help to his parishioners. We doubt that he will gain a great deal in skill by studying the techniques and theories of psychologists and psychiatrists. Without specific supervised training in the use of therapeutic techniques he may only misuse them. Moreover, the person who consults a minister may have quite different attitudes and expectations than the same individual would have in consulting a psychiatrist. The pastor is a symbol of the religion which he represents. To many of his parishioners the minister is a representative of God. Techniques which are adapted to the clinical situation may not be equally well adapted to pastoral counseling. Only research on specific problems of pastor counseling will tell us what techniques are most effective for the minister, but our best guess is that the minister can be of most help if he stays in his element, retaining his role characteristics of Christian mercy, love, sympathy, wise reflection and reassurance, and if possible avoiding bringing in his role of external conscience. Man in distress needs God's love.

Among Us—

What My Radio Experience Taught Me About Spiritual Needs

By Howard Conn

FOR eleven Sundays last year I was privileged to take Dr. Ralph W. Sockman's place on the National Radio Pulpit. I derived considerable emotional satisfaction from this opportunity because for the 20 years of my ministry I have looked up to Dr. Sockman as the preacher best able, week after week, both to challenge and to console with the full impact of the gospel. I was further thrilled by the privilege of sharing spiritual insights on these Sundays with an unseen congregation numbering perhaps more than a million souls.

But beyond receiving these personal satisfactions, I also learned much from the experience. I learned something about myself, for not since seminary days have I had such rigorous, practical and constructive criticism of speaking mannerisms and delivery techniques. Also made clear to me again was the fact that my preaching does not have as wide appeal as that of many others. My mail response, while sizeable, was not phenomenal.

More important than what I learned about myself is what the experience taught me concerning the spiritual needs of people. The more than four thousand letters I received from listeners are but a small portion of the nearly three million requests for copies of radio sermons that are annually sent to the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches.

Four Thousand Letter Writers

Yet these four thousand letters are revealing. Not often does a preacher have the chance to look into the souls of that many people. Why did they write? What did they want? What are the hungers for which they seek satisfaction?

As I read these letters the people behind them take form and face in my imagination. They become flesh-and-blood men and women whom any minister would want to help. They are the counterparts of those both in our churches and outside our doors to whom we long to come with the good news of what life can be for the children of God.

The writers of these letters seem to arrange themselves into six major groupings.

1. *The Moved.* The fact that four thousand persons took the trouble to write either a postal or letter requesting a copy means that the message of God's truth can move people. It strikes a responsive chord to their needs and aspirations. Often when I hear a good message I intend to write a word of appreciation or request a copy, but I seldom do so. Yet these people were moved to act at least to the extent of asking for a copy of a message upon which they wished to meditate at greater length. Every time a minister speaks in his own pulpit or at an outside gathering he should aim to say with force and directness something important enough to move his hearers to a better grasp of life's meaning.

2. *The Lonely.* Many writers volunteered to tell their life stories. An 85-year-old Maine woman whose father had been a minister told of his move to Kansas in 1879. A widow wrote of her father's experiences as a home missionary pastor in the Dakotas 70 years ago. A blind woman told what radio sermons mean to her, adding, "Though blind, I think I see more than most people." Many invalids and shut-ins wrote friendly notes about their situations and their enjoyment of Dr. Sockman's radio ministry. A woman who for 30 years has conducted a magazine and greeting-card business from her bedside wrote: "Tell others who are discouraged that I have found that in Christ there is a way out of despair and a new life of joy."

The church must always reckon with lonely people everywhere, both in and out of our fellowship. We are sometimes prone to give attention to the busy, active, influential members of the community; but beyond these in every parish are other souls, often unrecognized, who feel lonely, neglected, discouraged. They want to tell their story and to sense that somebody cares about them. Because no one at home will listen, they write to a radio voice who seems to offer the understanding they seek.

3. *The Fanatics.* These are the people whose lengthy letters deal with subjects completely irrelevant to anything mentioned by the radio sermons, but who find in the preacher a name to whom they can write. They are obsessed with a single idea which they want to explain to anyone who will give attention. Among my four thousand letters I received quite a number like this. Some were incoherent. Others went into detail about matters most of us would think trivial. There was, for example, an explanation of flying saucers as missionary visitors from the spirit world; a poem on the bribery of politicians; a plea for the use of Christ's name more often in common speech; a condemnation of spitting. A woman listener sent a long essay on "Equal Citizenship of Pioneering Women," which rose to this dramatic climax: "Nowhere in the Constitution is there any law that can be misconstrued to mean that marriage deprives either a husband or wife of their individual constitutional rights of self-defense."

I wonder if many persons obsessed by such ideas might not have been saved from a one-sided development if earlier, friends and family had given them more sympathetic attention. Fanatics often seem a nuisance, but they are children of God whose special energies or insights should be channeled into constructive and normal associations.

Advice Asked about Problems

4. *The Puzzled.* Probably the most significant letters came from individuals who wrote for help with real problems. How can a rural church in Georgia get missionary aid? How can people be aroused to a missionary concern beyond the giving of money? What book would best start a person on the prayer life? Should a sister take her brother to court when he has defrauded her out of her share of the family inheritance? Should a Methodist family let their children go to a Missouri Synod Lutheran Sunday school in their neighborhood? What should a wife do when her husband's church practices "closed" communion? Should the church marry divorced persons?

The world is full of people with problems. The church must always address itself to them, and show that religion is related to the needs of people. No wise preacher will attempt to give quick and easy answers, but he will listen sympathetically, endeavor to suggest the wider setting to problems, and rally the resources by which they may be met.

5. *The Objectors.* As a liberal pastor in a city where conservative churches are numerous I am accustomed to receiving protests from those who say I am not a Christian. Anyone who takes a position will always arouse some who object. Yet I received surprisingly few such letters this summer—not more than 10. I attribute this fact not to any universal acceptance of my preaching but to the fact that the National Radio Pulpit has through the years built a congregation of listeners who want sermons related to life rather than dogma. In every community, radios on Sunday morning offer quite a number of fundamentalist programs so that the theological conservatives do not listen to Dr. Sockman and his associates. However, a minister, be he modernist or conservative, must recognize that as he presents truths that are vital to life he will arouse the objections of those whose interpretations are different.

6. *The Grateful.* Any minister who is direct and sincere in his approach will find himself speaking to the condition of great numbers who have hungered

thirsted without being fed. There 60 million unchurched people in United Stotes. They are not all in-erent or antagonistic. Multitudes of n simply have not found in the rches that which satisfies their deep-needs. They are not interested in ring traditional sermons on damna-or in listening to proud claims of lusive salvation. The radio preacher an unusual opportunity to reach h folk.

Liberal Approach and Appeal

he theme of my radio messages was new wine of the Spirit which Jesus gs to fill men with a spiritual crea-ty and a zest for living that bursts old conventions. I frankly acknowl-ed that the church today is in too ny instances concerned with narrow, matic, limiting concepts rather than h the dynamic which breaks all con-s and leads a man out into the uni-se to seek the fullest possible truth. Most encouraging were the letters ressing gratitude for this emphasis. 5-year-old paraplegic sent a 40-page ount of his spiritual pilgrimage, a test against narrow sectarianism. penetrated to the essence when he d, "I don't know or understand God ly, but I love him." A Roman Catho-in Texas wrote that he was glad to r a Protestant who didn't talk about mnation. Another thanked me for erance, observing, "We shall all meet the cross, and there the ground is el." A copy of the message was re-ested for an army officer "who thinks church enslaves the mind."

Some of my friends doubt the au-nticity of the letter I prize the most, m a man in the upper Michigan minsula who actually wrote as fol-vs: "Your sermon 'The Truth that nnot Be Limited' left a deep impres-n on me and many others. We love d. We study the Bible. We labor to rn the purposes of life and of God ntinually. But we do not belong to y church. We would like to. Our as differ from the minister and we e not wanted. God help us. He has by ur sermon, for it gave us hope that e church may yet tolerate the little ferences in our mentality and lines of ought. It will help the church also. e are planning to attend again."

Needs Revealed in Letters

Surely there are great numbers of ople who would attend our churches ain if they believed they would find ere contact with the all-loving and l-powerful God. Dare we go on keep-g Christ confined to an organizational ttern, to a scheme of revelation, and a doctrinal strait jacket when he can tisfy the hungers of people standing tside the doors of our churches?

I hope I shall remember these letters I plan my preaching hereafter. They ere written not to enhance my pride t to reveal to me the many needs of ople. The Lord would use you and e to speak to them, to serve them and lead them.

NEW BOOKS

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AT ALL BOOKSTORES

ABINGDON PRESS

Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

The Preacher and His Text

RECENTLY I heard two good sermons, both with the same text, from the too often neglected book of Hebrews. Neither sermon indulged in overconfident pronouncements as to what "faith" meant to the writer and how nice it would be if there were more of that admirable quality in the world today; neither sermon made any reference whatever to Melchizedek. In a word, both were distinct achievements, at least decided novelties.

Both of them were good, wholesome sermons, principally, I suppose, because both preachers are good, wholesome men. My only criticism of them is that their thesis, despite the preachers' confident assumption, was not supported by the verse they had selected as a text. Of course, there was nothing novel in that fact. Again and again during the singing of the final hymn I find myself agreeing with the Boston dean: "If the text had smallpox, the rest of the sermon would never catch it."

The text which both preachers had selected was the concluding clause of Hebrews 11:40, ". . . that apart from us they should not be made perfect." These words had, and properly, caught the preachers' attention, although neither knew what they meant. And they were intrigued by the phrase. Too often, they insisted, religion is regarded as a completed performance. In the formative days of the past God did things for men; the patriarchs and the apostles did things of mighty import. But that is long since past, the tracks have all been laid; in a word, "Other men have labored, and we have entered into their labors."

Similar Interpretation

In the text they had selected, both preachers, quite independently, were convinced that they had found support for their wholesome dissatisfaction with any view which suggested that the tale was told. Without quoting Isaac Watts, they were convinced, as was he, that there were plenty of foes still to be fought and that sailing through bloody seas was imperative for us if the past workers were to recline on beds of ease, flowery or otherwise. In short, there were tasks for us to do, and plenty of them. Unless we did them, not only would they remain undone, but the whole struggle up to now would be incomplete—might even prove pointless. Did not the unknown writer insist, having catalogued the heroes of the past, that *our* experience was necessary for their work to be really perfect; that is, that their labors had not completed the task, that it was still imperfect, that we must bring it to its glorious fulfillment, must place the capstone on the foundations which they had laid?

No, I do not think that was what the early writer had meant at all. These values—and no sensible man will deny their importance—were not before his eyes. His emphasis was the exact reverse. His argument is not that our achievements are necessary to bring the labors of the past to perfection but that we are mighty lucky to have any share in them at all. It is not that our experience is necessary for their rewards to be full but rather that God in his goodness had reserved for centuries what he could have accomplished at any time. He could have sent his Great High Priest whenever he had chosen, and the work would in no wise have suffered. Lucky for us that in his kindness he had been so patient and had waited so long before so acting.

Reverse Emphasis

Far be it from me to deny that in the other point of view are profound values. I am not trying to weigh one against the other. I am simply insisting that it is utterly illegitimate, however noble the purpose, to twist ancient words into seeming support of what to the author would have been little short of blasphemous. Probably both preachers could have found texts which did support their views; failing that, they could still have made their point without scriptural support, and to thinking men it would have been no whit less impressive.

After all, there is a profound sermon yet to be preached from these words correctly interpreted, which would have been very different from those I heard. Each age is a bit too self-assured that this is the crowning day, that it stands at (or as) the real culminating point of all history, that it has all the answers and thus is under obligation to straighten out all the messes of the past. Can any parent who has a child in high school easily remember an evening meal in which, somewhere between soup and dessert, it has not been insisted that the younger generation is the hope of the world, that the fool errors of the fuddy-duddy oldsters are now going to be really cleared up, and pronto, by those who have all the answers? I may be unduly impatient and unsympathetic, but I have become a bit wearied at what seems to me an incessant replaying of a phonograph record worn a bit thin.

Is there no place for this other insistence—of course, it will have to be rephrased, and drastically—that the past is not one consistent sorry tale of stupid blunders, of pygmies who arrogantly thought themselves giants; but that in soberest earnest occasionally "in those days there were giants in the land," from whom even the starry-eyed younger generation has much to learn and to whom it may, not unbecomingly, occasionally be grateful?

Pulpit Calendar

July 1—Independence Sunday.
July 4—Independence Day.
July 8—7th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 15—8th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 22—9th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 29—10th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 5—11th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 12—12th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 19—13th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 26—Festival of Christ the King.
Sept. 2—Labor Sunday.
Sept. 3—Labor Day.
Sept. 9—16th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept 16—17th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 23—18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 30—19th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 30-Oct. 7—Christian Education Week.

N. B.

THE materialist's universe had the enormous attraction that it offered you limited liabilities. No strictly infinite disaster could overtake you in it. Death ended all. And if ever finite disasters proved greater than one wished to bear, suicide would always be possible. The horror of the Christian universe was that it had no door marked Exit.—*C. S. Lewis,* Surprised by Joy *(New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955). Used by permission.*

Is Baffled

IR: Dr. Straton (June) has me
led. How can we "observe the spirit
olved in the admonition of Jesus 'not
e called rabbi' " by calling every-
y doctor? He lists the courses open
minister with respect to a doctor's
ree as (1) to refuse it, (2) to spend
e additional years in school for it,
to pull wires for it, (4) to buy it, or
(he didn't assign the number) to
nd one or more "small" (which
ns to be used synonymously with
standard) schools in the expectation
his degree will be "almost guaran-
l" if he spends 10 or 15 years in the
e state. Does Dr. Straton know of
way a man can receive an honorary
ree without degrading himself?
lis plan to elevate the B.D. to a doc-
ite upon the completion of three to
years should not be "automatic"
the result of satisfying specific
dards defining "effective service."
all those still won't deliver us from
evil it seems to me Jesus was de-
ncing: an overweening pride in ex-
als.

NE WHO HAS A DOCTOR'S DEGREE,
but didn't buy, beg, steal,
work for, or homestead it.

Doctorate for All?

IR: Dr. Straton's article on degrees,
ned and honorary, brings to mind
items regarding advanced educa-
for the minister which have long
bled this writer.
irst is the question of the desirabil-
of broad learning for the minister.
s is the age of research and special-
ion, when the scholar is supposed to
w more and more about less and
. But the minister is the one person
is still required to be a multitude
men—theologian, teacher, adminis-
or, counselor, citizen and friend of
n. Is it worth while that he spend
e or five years beyond his pro-
sional training becoming better ac-
inted with fine literature, art, his-
, music and politics? If so, should
some advanced degree be available
him in recognition of this achieve-
nt? It would seem that this culture
ld make a contribution to the life
effectiveness of the minister which
ot exactly parallel to that of the en-
eer or even the physician.
he second suggestion seems at first
nce to be in contradiction to the first.
higher education the minister lacks
portunity for specialization in the
y fields with which he is concerned
ry day. He may think of himself as
eologian, and preaching is probably
first love, yet he finds that it is the
anization and administration of the
gram which require the greater por-
n of his time and energy. He is
stantly faced with the necessity of
thinking up his own solution to prob-
lems, and his own schemes for enlisting
workers and getting the work done. But
when he considers doing graduate work
for a higher degree, it seems that any
field except research into theology or
church history is a side issue. Church
administration in America in the mid-
20th century is different from that of
any other time or place, but a student
must be able to read the European the-

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ologians in the original before he can even gain admittance to a seminary for advanced work.

Do college presidents and seminary deans read Pulpit Post?

First Christian, ALAN C. LYNCH.
Sulphur Springs, Texas.

SIR: The article by Dr. Straton was super! I've been thinking about the "problem" for a long, long time; have talked with some educators—laymen in churches—about it. I think there can be a solution. Straton may have it, but theological seminaries seem to shy away and colleges seldom give a D.D. Just watch the list of honorary degrees granted this year! I'll keep track too.

HOWARD P. WEATHERBEE.
Bethany Congregational Christian,
Swampscott, Mass.

He Mistakes Article for Sermon

SIR: "The Gospel That Is Not Heard," by G. Wayne Glick (June), seems to be well named. As far as that sermon is concerned, the gospel still hasn't been heard because most people would simply be lost if hearing it, and wouldn't go to the trouble of reading it. Give it to us as theology or philosophy if you must, but, please, not "as contemporary preaching." One might expect an offering like this from the preacher-scientist William G. Pollard, but his message is understandable, and it makes sense; it would no doubt be received with profit by the average congregation. Why can't a professor of religion make his point as clear?

No doubt your June issue is an exception, being commencement month, but it seems your choice of authors runs quite heavily to professors. Should not a journal of contemporary preaching have a larger representation among those who are currently preaching to regular congregations?

While I am writing, I too will vote for the biographical sketch on the same page as the sermon.

LYIE D. STEPHENSON.
First Methodist,
Ashland, Wis.

Sound Advice

SIR: Just as I thought—and wrote you—that your article (*Christian Century,* Nov. 23, 1955) on the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches was the worst bit of reporting I ever read, so let me say that your editorial in the June Pulpit is one of the soundest and most potentially helpful bits of advice that I have ever seen offered to preachers, young or o

Variety in pace, inflection, volur sentence-length, pause, emphasis, e are so vital to enjoyable and effect speech (from the hearer's standpoir that one would think that every speal would be taught it from the beginnir But such, lamentably, is far from bei the case. Evidently not all teachers speech or preaching know how to g such ideas across.

Of course, all this variety of expr sion ought to rise naturally out of var ing moods and contrasted ideas with the speech or sermon itself. Probab the fault lies at both points: thinking the first place, and writing and speec technique in the second. Are you f miliar with Silas Curry's *Vocal a Literary Interpretation of the Bibl* It deals with exactly such matters.

I hope your fine editorial will much to stimulate both the thought a the practice of preachers. Your ov writing sets us a good example.

ARTHUR ACY ROUNER.
Cadman Memorial Church,
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Growing Problem

SIR: Edward J. Tyler has presente parish ministers with a tremendo challenge in his "The Man in the Gra Suit" (May, p. 24). How to preac and teach and heal without becomir bogged down in the statistics and ane dotes of the ministry is an ever grov ing problem as churches continue expand. Let's have more of this kind material!

HUGH B. PENNEY.
West Parish Congregational,
Andover, Mass.

Heard a Thousand Times

SIR: After hearing the same sermo illustration for the thousandth time, can report that a man was strolling on afternoon and came to a scene of cor struction activity where three laborer were at work. He asked one, "What ar you doing?"

"Listen, Mac," replied the workma without looking up, "you're the tent guy today that's asked me that ques tion. Don't you preachers have any thing else to do but bother us workmer as you look for sermon material? I'm not mixing cement. I'm not building cathedral. I'm digging to locate broken sewer pipe. It's a stinking jo and it pays $1.56 an hour. You want t trade?"

Now let's bury this one. O.K.?

ELDRED JOHNSTON.
St. Mark's Episcopal,
Columbus, Ohio.

All in Favor?

SIR: By all means, let's have th biographical sketch on the same pag with the sermon or article!

LAWRENCE ROUMPF.
Quincy, Wash.

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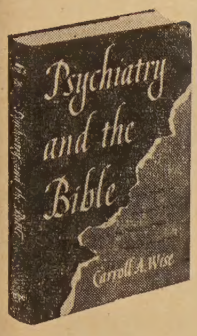

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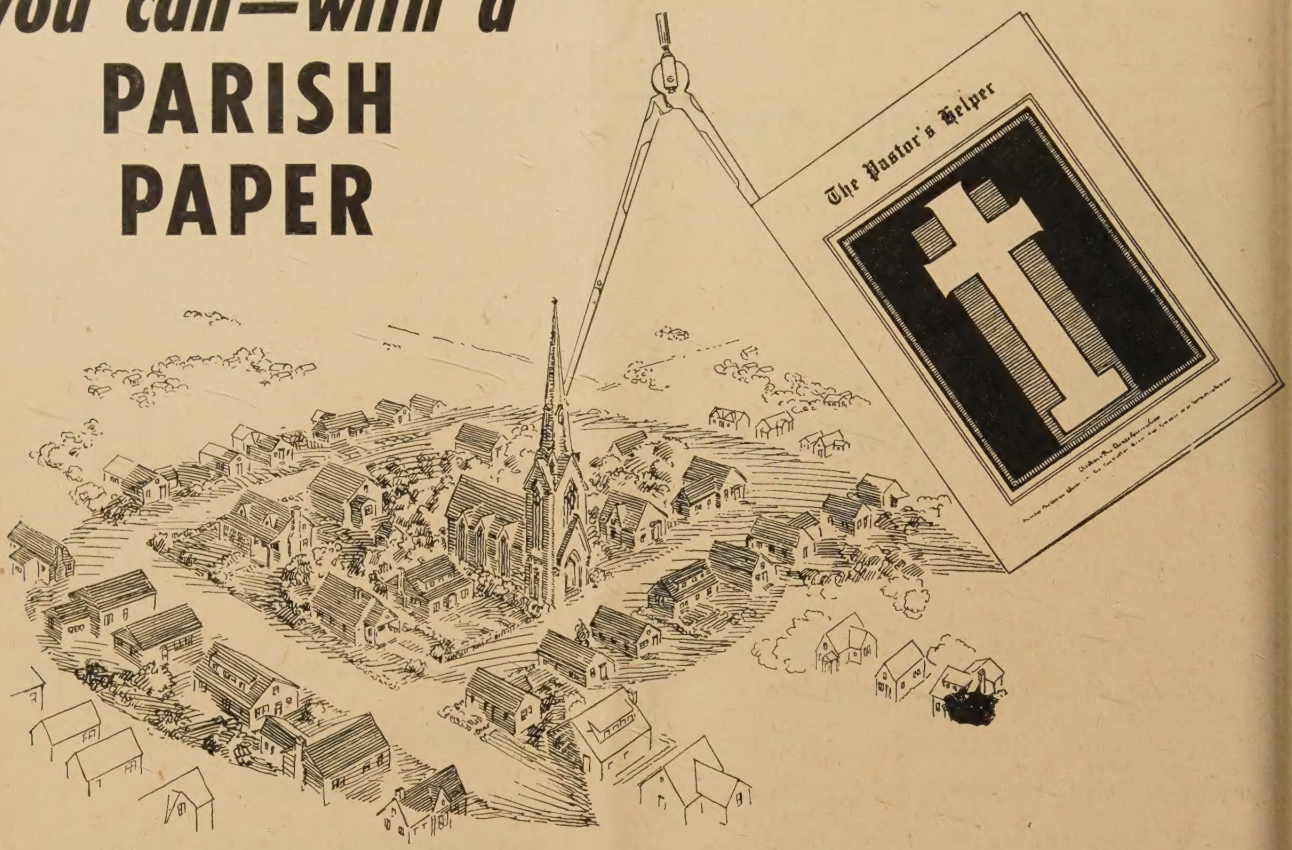

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